

THE 50+ Connection

NEWS and EVENTS from the
Howard County Office on Aging and Independence

A Publication of the Department of Community Resources and Services

Volume 11, No. 1 • January 2021

Renewed Hope for a Healthy New Year

Howard County's Virtual 50+ Center has no walls but can be as expansive as your imagination. The alternative model has become the Office on Aging and Independence's "go to" option for older adults to access health, wellness, fitness, and social engagement programs under current social distancing restrictions. "As we begin the New Year with renewed hope for an end to the COVID-19 pandemic, OAI's online programs will continue to provide a framework for older adults who want to build a healthier and more engaged version of themselves in 2021," said Barbara Scher, 50+ Center division manager.

Each month, the virtual programs guide outlines the full array of programs accessible via Webex in the comfort and safety of your own home, providing ongoing opportunities for learning, enrichment and health promotion endeavors. To view the current guide and sign up for program updates, visit www.howardcountymd.gov/50pluscenters.

A number of programs are led by seasoned instructors like Tai Chi Master, Jianping "Ping" Mao, who has been teaching both beginner and advanced classes at the East Columbia 50+ Center for 14 years. Practicing Tai Chi provides both physical and mental benefits, and is a gentle way to reduce stress.

Nelson Pollack has been taking Tai Chi for the past six years, and notes, "Even before these challenging times, Tai Chi had become a key part of my overall wellness. Learning the forms has improved my muscle tone, my balance and it helps keep my mind active. Plus, I have met interesting people and found new friendships."

A recently added feature of the 50+ Virtual Offerings is the monthly **Exercise Pass Program**. This value-added package (\$50/month) now includes six additional classes to improve balance and strength, for a total of 26 weekly classes in a variety of formats. Cindy Saathoff, center director, and Michelle Rosenfeld, exercise coordinator, at the Ellicott City 50+ Center, collaborated to adapt this popular group exercise package to the virtual model. "When the centers closed, we knew we had to do something to preserve the camaraderie among participants, so I reached out to everyone and invited them to join me online," said Rosenfeld. "It's been exciting to see so many of them step out of their comfort zones and embrace the world of 21st century technology. Seeing familiar faces on the screen and having the opportunity to engage with them before and after class makes everyone feel so much better."

The programs continue to evolve with new and exciting options, such as **1:1 Virtual Personal Training** offering one-on-one appointments with a personal trainer, or a 30-minute **Virtual Consultation** with Exercise Specialist Malarie Burgess to custom tailor a fitness and nutrition plan best suited for YOU. To schedule a consultation, go to <https://bit.ly/39BJTEi> or contact Malarie at mburgess@howardcountymd.gov or 410-313-6073. To schedule sessions for a personal training package, call 410-313-1400.

Since the onset of the pandemic, the 50+ Centers and OAI team members have risen to the challenge of virtually developing and maintaining a sense of community for older adults in Howard County. The team convenes weekly to conceptualize, implement and evaluate its programs to ensure that the offerings address changing interests and needs for engagement.

"The challenges of COVID-19 may still be here, but so are we," says Scher. "We look forward to the day when we can safely reopen our centers, and also recognize some members may still want to access programs from home. Once the centers reopen, we will continue to offer a comprehensive schedule of virtual programs."

For more information and to register for classes, call 410-313-1400 or 410-313-5440. To register for the monthly fitness pass and Tai Chi classes, visit <https://apm.activecommunities.com/howardcounty/> on the Howard County ActiveNet website.

A Message from Howard County Executive

Calvin Ball

Happy New Year Howard County! The start of a new year usually encourages people to make resolutions and set new goals, with renewed hope for a fresh start.

This past year was one marked by a pandemic, financial instability, our inability to be with ones we love, and the loss of too many of our residents to this terrible virus. This month, there is hope on our horizon with a vaccine, which may enable us to reunite safely with many of our family and friends in the near future. In the meantime, we must continue to do all we can to stop the spread of COVID-19 this winter and stay Covid safe.

January is the perfect time to set a goal to live a more intentional and connected life. We all missed out on so many meaningful connections this past year; what better time to re-engage with old friends and neighbors than in the new year? Take the time to reach out to family, friends and neighbors to ask how they're doing; make a safe plan to take a walk; or schedule a video call with loved ones.

Now more than ever, we need to check-in on one another. An important and often overlooked part of being healthy is to work on our mental health. This year, let us all resolve and recommit to asking one another more often, "Are you doing OK?" These might be just the words someone needs to hear.

Wishing you and your families a safe, happy, and healthy start to the new year!



HAPPY NEW YEAR

May 2021 bring you and your loved ones health, happiness & peace.

Make a Healthy New Year Plan, Not a Resolution

By Carmen Roberts, MS, RD, LDN, Nutritionist, Howard County Office on Aging and Independence

If you're like most people, you've created a few New Year's resolutions for yourself. But are they attainable? Start 2021 off right with realistic goals you can achieve.

#1 — COMMIT TO A HEALTHIER LIFESTYLE

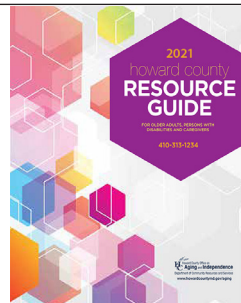
Instead of setting an impossible goal like "lose 50 pounds in two months," adopt more realistic, positive changes that can help you lose weight for good. To change unhealthy habits like eating out too frequently or not getting enough physical activity, start with small, achievable goals. Prep dinner at home the night before and use the time you would sit in a drive-thru line to take a 30-minute walk outside. You will save hundreds of calories by eating a healthier meal at home, and you can burn over 100 calories by taking that brisk walk. These small changes alone could yield a weight loss of a pound a week.

#2 — GET MOVING

As we age, a lack of physical activity contributes significantly to weight gain. But you don't have to go to the gym every day to get fit. Think of times when you are sedentary when you could be moving. Do you sit in a lawn chair at your grandchild's soccer practice? Walk laps around the field instead. Or, call a friend you haven't seen for a while and meet up at the mall for a walk; combining physical activity with quality social time is a great way to stay active.

ONLINE INFORMATION and RESOURCES!

Check out the **2021 Howard County Resource Guide** featuring resources, programs and services geared to Howard County's older adults, persons with disabilities and caregivers; available online at <https://bit.ly/3kygVru>.



#3 — EXPAND YOUR PALATE

Do you make the same meals week after week, and/or order takeout just because "it's easier?" Try spending a few minutes looking for a new recipe to try with healthy ingredients. If you are caring for your grandkids, get them involved. Cooking together creates wonderful memories!

#4 — MAKE TIME FOR YOURSELF

Many of us have a hard time saying "no" to anyone who asks for help, whether it's volunteering for a charitable organization, overbooking your weekends with activities, or helping people who count on you. Saying no to things that you don't enjoy or cannot fit into your day will free up more time for spending quality time with family and friends.



With Gratitude for Service

The Howard County Commission on Aging expresses profound thanks to outgoing Chair Sharonlee Vogel for her solid leadership and dedicated service over the past 15 years. Office on Aging and Independence Administrator Jenna Crawley expressed her gratitude at the final meeting of 2020, thanking Sharonlee for her vision and tireless advocacy for the county's growing older adult population, saying "I have learned so much from you, and I hope we can continue to work on our shared mission together." COA commissioners lauded Sharonlee for her leadership skills, and her ability to bring out the best in them. "I would do it all over again," said Sharonlee of her tenure. "That is the greatest compliment I can give all of you."



PRESENTED BY



Don't miss out! This online event runs through January 31!

beacon50expo.com



Department of Community Resources and Services

The 50+ Connection is published monthly by the Howard County Office on Aging and Independence.

This publication is available in alternate formats upon request. To join our subscriber list, email kahenry@howardcountymd.gov

9830 Patuxent Woods Drive, Columbia, MD 21046
410-313-6410 (VOICE/RELAY) • www.howardcountymd.gov/aging

Find us on www.Facebook.com/HoCoCommunity

Kim Higdon Henry, Editor • Email: kahenry@howardcountymd.gov

Advertising contained in the Beacon is not endorsed by the Office on Aging and Independence or by the publisher.

Powerful Tools FOR Caregivers

An **ONLINE** Program for Your Health and Safety!
WINTER 2020

PTC is Now Offering a **SPECIAL** Bonus
Class to Better Understand Dementia:
SESSION ZERO

January 13 THRU **February 24**
6:00 TO 7:30 pm

SEVEN CONSECUTIVE WEDNESDAYS

If you are a caregiver, we encourage you to register for this
dynamic self-care program. We are here to help you!

There is NO CHARGE to attend these self-care classes!

— FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO REGISTER —

Kathy Wehr

CAREGIVER SUPPORT PROGRAM MANAGER

410-313-5955 (VOICE/RELAY) • kwehr@howardcountymd.gov